

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate a storied institution of faith in the Third Congressional District. This year, St. Philip's Episcopal Church is celebrating its 150th anniversary, and I would like to take a moment to reflect on the history of this esteemed church and its contributions to the greater Richmond community.

St. Philip's Episcopal Church was founded in 1861 as a mission of St. James Church by freemen/women and indentured servants of Virginia aristocrats and landowners. The congregation flourished during the following four years and provided a number of services to its members, including a school. Unfortunately, at the end of the Civil War in 1865, St. Philip's physical structure was destroyed in what the church describes as "mysterious circumstances." The church persevered in spite of its overwhelming loss and continued to congregate in the homes of its members. In 1869, with the support of the Diocese of Virginia, St. James Church and the family of J.E.B. Stuart, the church was able to rebuild its physical structure.

In 1920, the church became a self-supporting Parish and since then has ventured to serve God, the community and the world. Over the years, they have been involved in various service projects including St. Francis Pantry, Girl Scouts, and Narcotics Anonymous. They have also been involved with Caritas, a volunteer organization providing food and shelter for the homeless, and Modern Maturity, an outreach program with a focus on providing recreation and fellowship for individuals who are at home during the day.

Today, St. Philip's prevails as the oldest and largest of the seven predominantly African-American congregations in the Diocese of Virginia. It also has the distinction of being the sixth oldest historically African American congregation in the Episcopal Church and was the first to be founded in the South. Currently, St. Philip's consists of nearly 230 members.

As St. Philip's Episcopal Church gathers to celebrate this historic milestone, the church can truly remember its past, celebrate its present, and focus on the future as it continues "Celebrating, Living, Dreaming." I would like to congratulate Rev. Phoebe Roaf and all of the members of the St. Philip's Episcopal Church on the occasion of their 150th Anniversary. I wish them many more years of dedicated service to the community.